

the deputies withdrew in high good humour from the presence, In the ante-chamber they met John of Gaunt, with whom they exchanged some courteous words.

Feeling, however, still ran high on both sides. Lampoons and verses against the Duke were posted about the city. He requested the Bishops still assembled for Convocation to excommunicate the authors. The prelates hesitated, fearing that the Londoners might use the same violence against them as they had shown against the nobles. The more respectable citizens, however, desirous to appease authority and to dissociate themselves from the acts of the mob, encouraged them to issue the excommunications, which did the anonymous authors small harm. This incident showed how little John of Gaunt gave heed to the essence of Wycliffe's teaching, for one of the points of doctrine on which the informer at this time laid most stress was the wickedness and the spiritual inefficacy of excommunication when used for political purposes. But the Duke cared for none of these things.¹

At the end of February, the remaining business of Parliament, which had been adjourned during these events, was rapidly wound up. The Houses were dissolved, and a few days later Convocation separated. During the next month the Lancastrian Government recovered itself, and so far re-established its position against the Londoners that the King again summoned the Mayor and Sheriffs before him to answer for the late disturbances*. The Archbishop, the Duke and many other lords were in the presence-chamber where the accused were heard. Sir Eberhard Aston, lately Treasurer, and now Chamberlain, spoke on behalf of his master, the Duke, and upbraided the citizens for the riot. Their reply throws an interesting light on the London of the time. They pleaded that it was impossible for them to check the excesses of the mob, as the common people, having no money or houses of their own to forfeit, were easily stirred to riot as they had nothing to lose. There can be little doubt that this refers to the apprentices, whose social and legal status answers perfectly to this description. In the more violent and tragical riots four years later, we are told expressly by a contemporary

¹ *Gibson, Angl.* 127-180.